



Public Service Announcement

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BLM Alaska Fire Service Smokejumper Training Jumps Start Next Week

FAIRBANKS – Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service (BLM AFS) Smokejumpers will take to the sky starting April 8 in preparation for the upcoming fire season. The required refresher and training jumps will occur in April and May, primarily between 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Smokejumpers will be parachuting in four primary areas:

- Near Birch Hill on Fort Wainwright
- Chena River Lakes Flood Control Project
- 2.3 Mile Chena Hot Springs Road
- Nordale Road just north of Chena River Bridge

The refresher jumps for returning smokejumpers will occur once or twice per day between 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on certain days between April 8 and May 11.

The tempo will increase with the addition of rookie jumps May 11-15 and May 18-22 and then parachuted cargo drops, known as paracargo, at the Chena River Lakes Flood Control Project May 12-15. The rookie training jumps will occur up to four times a day between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. The paracargo training on the Chena Flood Plain includes as many as five lifts each day between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. If necessary, alternate dates for paracargo training will occur May 18-22.

Changes may occur due to weather and other limiting factors. Smokejumpers will continue to use these jump spots for ongoing proficiency training through mid-September.

Pilots should check the Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) for information about smokejumper aircraft, and avoid flying over these areas while jumps and paracargo drops are taking place.

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The Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service (AFS) located at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, provides wildland fire suppression services for over 240 million acres of Department of the Interior and Native Corporation Lands in Alaska. In addition, AFS has other statewide responsibilities that include: interpretation of fire management policy; oversight of the BLM Alaska Aviation program; fuels management projects; and operating and maintaining advanced communication and computer systems such as the Alaska Lightning Detection System. AFS also maintains a National Incident Support Cache with a \$10 million inventory. The Alaska Fire Service provides wildland fire suppression services for America's "Last Frontier" on an interagency basis with the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources, USDA Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Military in Alaska.